

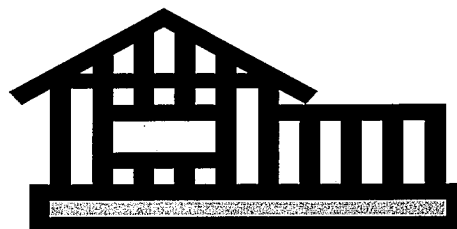
# THE HOMELESS IN LONG BEACH

## Did you know...

- Long Beach has a population of 461,522 and is the 5th largest city in California and the 34th largest city in the United States.
- Long Beach is ranked 7th nationally in level of poverty.
- Long Beach is ranked 6th nationally in level of children under 18 years of age living in poverty.
- Long Beach's median household income ranks 46th nationally at \$36,652.
- One in every five jobs in the United States pays less than a poverty-level wage.
- 39 million Americans do not earn enough money to cover basic needs like housing and food.

## WHO ARE THE HOMELESS IN LONG BEACH?

- In any city in the United States, 1% of the total population is homeless. In Long Beach, however, 1.3% of the population (5,845 persons) is homeless.
- 43.3% of the homeless population is chronically homeless, meaning they have been homeless for a year or more or they have been homeless four times in the last three years.
- There are 795 homeless families in Long Beach.
- One out of every three (35.4%) homeless person in Long Beach is a child under the age of 18.



- Women make up 28.4% of the homeless population.
- There are 227 seniors 62 years of age or older who are homeless in Long Beach.
- More than half (58.7%) of Long Beach's homeless population were residents of Long Beach prior to becoming homeless.

## WHY ARE THEY HOMELESS?

### Poverty

- According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2003), the poverty threshold for one person is \$9,573 and the poverty threshold for a family of four is \$18,660.
- There are 112,373 individuals and 23,868 families living in poverty in Long Beach (U.S. Census Bureau, 2003).
- Homelessness and poverty are inextricably linked. When difficulties arise due to limited resources, it is often housing that must be given up as it absorbs a high proportion of income. Therefore, living in poverty means that one is an illness, an

accident, or a paycheck away from homelessness.

### Lack of affordable housing

- Approximately one out of every seven American families has a critical housing need (National Housing Conference, 2002).
- The 2005 Fair Market Rent (FMR) for a two-bedroom apartment in Long Beach is \$1,123/month, which means a family must earn \$21.64/hour or \$44,924/year or two full-time minimum wage earners need to work 64 hours/week in order to afford a two-bedroom apartment in Long Beach (SCANPH, 2004).

- From 2003 to 2004, the FMR in Long Beach increased by 5.6%. From 2004 to 2005, it increased by 10.4%.

#### Lack of access to affordable health care

- Without access to affordable health care, acute and chronic health problems go untreated. As a result, health-related obstacles impair an individual's ability for self-sufficiency and independent living.

#### Low welfare benefits

- Current TANF benefits for a family of three is approximately one third of the poverty level (National Coalition for the Homeless).
- Based on the FMR, individuals receiving fixed incomes do not receive enough monthly income to adequately meet the city's rising housing cost. This includes disabled individuals and seniors.

## HOW MUCH DOES HOMELESSNESS COST THE CITY?

It costs	\$30	a day to place a homeless person in	supportive housing
	\$38		shelter
	\$64		jail
	\$85		prison
	\$607		a mental hospital
	\$1474		a hospital

- A bed in a shelter for a year costs \$8,067 more than the annual cost of federal housing subsidy, meaning it is more cost effective to place the homeless in supportive housing than in shelters (National Alliance to End Homelessness).
- The Long Beach Police Department spends approximately 400-500 hours/month on homeless issues citywide. This costs the city more than \$20,000 monthly or \$240,000 annually.

## WHAT CAN LONG BEACH DO?

- Strengthen the existing Continuum of Care (CoC) system.
- Provide more affordable housing.
- Lobby for increased funding for subsidized housing.
- Convert blighted motels into low-income efficiency units.
- Create eviction prevention programs.
- Provide free child care for low-income families to relieve the burden of paying for child care and for homeless families to allow parents to look for employment.
- Increase the number of emergency, transitional, and permanent supportive beds to assist the volume of people who experience homelessness in the city.
- Create and implement a 10 year plan to end homelessness. Through a community-wide effort, the City can put an end to the problem of homelessness in the City of Long Beach.

### What other cities are doing...

#### Los Angeles:

- Create 7,000 units of emergency shelter beds.
- Create 40,000 units of affordable housing county-wide.

#### San Francisco:

- Create 3,000 units of supportive housing.

#### New York:

- Create 12,000 units of supportive housing.
- Create 65,000 units of affordable housing.

#### Philadelphia:

- Created 6,500 supportive housing units and decreased their homeless population to 130.